

# The 'Lead-Safe' Landlord

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## The San Francisco Property Owner's Guide to Maintaining Lead-Safe Rental Property



Childhood Lead Prevention Program  
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San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-8930

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# Why Should I Be A Lead-Safe Landlord?



**P**rotect your tenants, your property, and your business!

**B**eing a responsible landlord, you must be aware of potentially dangerous situations that can harm you, your tenants, and your property.

Lead poisoning is a silent but very serious disease that can occur in both children and adults exposed to lead paint hazards. Most tenants are unaware of whether the paint in their home is lead-based. It is the landlord's responsibility to not only disclose all known lead hazards and notify of potential lead hazards but to provide regular, timely maintenance that will protect tenants from harm.

**A**ll maintenance and improvement work done to your property will increase its resale or refinance value. It is the responsibility of any rental property owner to provide safe and habitable housing units to their tenants. This is also required by law.

Landlords who fail to comply with disclosure notification and/or maintenance laws may be found liable for damages (medical care, pain and suffering, relocation costs) which can become very expensive.

## Most San Francisco housing contains lead-based paint.



**A**pproximately 94% of residential housing in San Francisco was built prior to 1978 and probably has lead-based paint. Lead-based paint chips, as well as soil and household dust contaminated with lead are the primary sources of childhood lead poisoning. Other household sources of lead

include leaching from brass fixtures, lead soldered copper pipes, and deteriorated vinyl mini-blinds.

# Lead can cause harm to children and adults.

Children are poisoned when exposed to poorly maintained paint, or when a recent renovation has created a lead hazard. Lead poisoning can also occur in adults. Those at greatest risk work in occupations where lead is present, such as painters, carpenters, laborers, and maintenance workers.

## The Health Effects of Lead Poisoning

### Children

- learning disabilities
- behavioral problems
- delayed physical growth
- hearing loss



### Adults

- high blood pressure
- headaches
- memory/concentration difficulties
- reproductive problems

## Being A Lead-Safe Landlord – A Simple Strategy . . .



As a San Francisco landlord, you are responsible for providing safe, habitable housing. Keeping your property lead-safe can be an easy, cooperative effort between you and your tenants.

### The lead-safe landlord strategy:

- ✕ **Communicate** with tenants about possible lead hazards; discuss the roles and responsibilities of both the tenant and property owner.
- ✕ **Comply** with both the San Francisco and the Federal EPA tenant notification laws and keep required documentation on file.
- ✕ **Provide** regular maintenance inspections and timely repair of all rental units. Maintain lead-painted or varnished surfaces in good repair.
- ✕ **Combine** lead-hazard control with other remodeling and home improvement work.
- ✕ **Hire** only a contractor who has been trained and certified by the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) to work with lead if a project involves removing or disturbing a painted surface.



# What The Law Requires You to Do

**Federal law (EPA)** requires property owners of pre-1978 dwellings to:

- 1 **Disclose** in writing any known lead-based paint and related hazards before selling or renting any housing built before 1978. A lead inspection or assessment is **not** required.
- 2 **Provide prospective** buyers or tenants with a copy of the EPA pamphlet, "*Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home*." This booklet offers information on common lead hazards found in homes and practical ways to protect your family. Both the property owner and the buyer/renter must sign an acknowledgment of receipt, which the owner keeps on file.



**San Francisco law** requires property owners of pre-1978 dwellings to:

- 1 Provide the "*San Francisco Lead Hazard Notice for Pre-1978 Dwellings*" to **both new and current tenants**.



- 2 **Keep** the signed Affidavit on file. This document states that the property owner **has** provided the "*San Francisco Lead Hazard Notice*" to tenants as required.

# #

# 1

The most important thing to do is to communicate with tenants, practice good building maintenance, and comply with the existing laws.

# How Can I Maintain Lead Safe Housing?



**P**revention is the easiest way to reduce health and liability risks. You may be concerned that keeping your property lead-safe is costly and complicated. The good news is that you can manage the lead simply, safely, and economically. Remodeling and maintenance work performed on your

property increases your property value for resale or refinancing.

You can start maintaining lead-safe housing by following this checklist.

## Maintenance Guidelines

- ✓ **A**ssume that any pre-1978 painted or varnished surface contains lead. Have surfaces tested for lead by sending paint chips to a laboratory or by contracting with a certified inspector or risk assessor. The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) can provide a list of testing professionals and services.
- ✓ **H**ave a maintenance schedule for your rental units and do a visual inspection at least annually. These inspections will allow you to assess the upkeep of your property and address any unreported problems.
- ✓ **E**ncourage tenants to report chipping or peeling paint immediately.
- ✓ **R**espond to all maintenance calls ASAP.
- ✓ **D**o major repairs while units are vacant. Removal of lead-based paint should be done while units are vacant to minimize the chance of exposing tenants to lead.
- ✓ **I**f you need construction services, hire only a licensed contractor with a CDHS certification in lead-safe practices. These contractors have been trained to minimize and control lead hazards on the job.

# 7alking With Your Tenants About Lead

Assure your tenants that lead-based paint in good condition is not a health risk. A lead-based paint becomes hazardous *only* when the paint begins to chalk, chip, or peel. Construction or renovation that removes or breaks a surface painted with lead-based paint also creates a lead hazard.



Tell tenants of your efforts to keep the property in good condition. Supply them with a maintenance / inspection schedule for their unit.

Encourage them to take part in protecting themselves and their families by cleaning the unit on a routine basis.

Advise tenants against performing maintenance work on their unit because they may unknowingly create a lead hazard.

Provide each tenant with a copy of the **Tenants Guide** found in the back of this booklet. This detachable guide outlines how tenants can take part in your efforts to keep the property lead-safe.

## Remember:

Lead-based paint *in good condition* is not a health hazard and should not be a concern to you or your tenants.

Lead paint becomes hazardous **only** when it is:

- + In poor condition, begins to chalk, peel or chip.
- + Damaged due to renovation or construction.



## 7 Training Your Maintenance Staff

An adequately trained maintenance staff can reduce both health and liability risks to the property owner.

### To prepare your staff:

- ➔ Increase awareness of lead hazards and correct work practices by providing the guides listed here to any worker disturbing lead-based paint.
- ➔ Send your staff to California Department of Health Services (CDHS) accredited training to certify them to work safely with lead-based paint.

Provide your maintenance staff with the following pamphlets:

- The Tool Box Guide (EPA)
- Lead Paint Hazards in Construction Projects (DBI)
- Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home (EPA)

All Pamphlets are available by calling Childhood Lead Prevention Program  
☎ (415) 554-8930

## Useful Phone Numbers



Use the following list to receive more information.

- General Information** ..... (415) 554-8930  
DPH Childhood Lead Prevention Program  
Lead Poisoning In Children
- EPA Tenant Brochure** ..... 1-800-424-LEAD  
*Protect Your Family From Lead In Your Home*
- Lead Hazard Reduction For Housing** ..... (415) 703-6667  
with Low Income Families
- Lead Laws For Employers and Employees** ... (510) 540-3448  
Work-Related Lead Poisoning Prevention
- Lead Certification and Training Classes** ... 1-800-597-LEAD  
and List of Certified Inspectors and Contractors

## Tenants Guide

### Become a Partner with Your Landlord and Help Protect Yourself From Lead Paint Hazards

If your building was built prior to 1978, it probably has lead-based paint. *Paint in good condition is not dangerous* and is not a cause for alarm. Talk with the property owner about your unit and the presence of lead-based paint. Use the following guidelines to become a partner in keeping your unit lead-safe.



Call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to report deteriorating paint and other maintenance repairs and concerns.



**Do *not*** do any maintenance work on your unit yourself. Attempting to fix something in the unit may only make the problem worse and may create a lead hazard. Protect you, your family and other tenants by calling the maintenance person to report any problems.



Communicate with your landlord and maintenance people about lead-based paint and hazard reduction in your building. Know your rights as a tenant and the responsibilities of your landlord.



Adhere to a regular cleaning schedule in your unit. If you live with lead-based paint, use the proper lead dust cleanup techniques. Remember that window sills, door and window jambs, and the floor and carpets around windows and doors collect the most dust.

**For More Information, call:**

**SF Childhood Lead Prevention Program ... (415) 554-8930**



DPH



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